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SECURITY INFORMATION

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

13 March 1952

SUBJECT: SE-24: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE COMMUNIST PSYCHOLOGICAL
WARFARE CAMPAIGN ALLEGING USE OF BIOLOGICAL
WARFARE BY THE US IN KOREA
(Draft for Board consideration)

THE PROBLEM

To estimate the significance of the Communist psychological warfare campaign alleging use of biological warfare by the US in Korea.

FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM

1. The current large-scale propaganda campaign charging UN forces with bacteriological warfare in Korea has been carefully coordinated throughout the Communist Orbit. It has been directed at both domestic and foreign audiences. It began with a charge by the North Korean Foreign Minister on 23 February, and has since been heavily emphasized by all Communist propaganda media.

2. On 6 March Peiping stated that the US had, during the preceding week, sent a total of 448 planes on germ warfare

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missions over Manchuria, and had in addition bombed and strafed at least one area in Manchuria.

3. On 8 March statements by Chinese Communist Premier Chou En-lai and an editorial in the official Chinese Communist Party organ

- a. Charged that American use of BW weapons was aimed at "wrecking the armistice talks in Korea, prolonging and expanding the aggressive war in Korea, and the instigating of new wars";
- b. Called upon the "peace-loving people of the world" to "rise up and put an end to the sinful designs of the United States Government".

4. Soviet Bloc and Communist front organizations have protested to the UN and to the International Red Cross, and an "international commission of democratic jurists" has been in Korea to examine the evidence of UN "crimes".

5. Intensive propaganda regarding the alleged BW operations is directed at the area supposedly under attack, and there is evidence of elaborate local efforts to alert Communist military personnel and civilians to carry out extensive and practical countermeasures. It thus seems probable that many of the Communist military personnel in the combat area have been convinced

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that reports of the attack are authentic. Technically, however, the Communist version of the UN attacks contains numerous flaws and inconsistencies.

6. Last spring there were reports of extensive typhus, cholera, typhoid and smallpox in North Korea. At present, there is no evidence of a recurrence, on a similar scale, of these conditions. However, the nature of the situation in North Korea is such that Communist leaders may be expecting an early outbreak of epidemics of serious proportions.

7. Although Communist forces in Korea are estimated to have the capability of conducting small-scale BW attacks, they are ill prepared to guard against the possibility of such an effort backfiring into their own ranks, and to defend themselves against possible UN retaliation in kind. Assuming that the Soviets would provide the munitions, Communist capabilities for offensive employment of BW might be substantial. However, Communist vulnerability to BW attacks is probably far greater than UN vulnerability to such attacks.

8. There is no firm evidence of an imminent Communist military offensive in Korea or elsewhere, nor of future Communist moves regarding the current cease-fire negotiations.

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POSSIBLE PURPOSES OF THE CAMPAIGN

9. A major purpose of the campaign is almost certainly to serve internal propaganda needs. In this respect the following objectives are probably most important:

- a. The establishment of an alibi in anticipation of an early outbreak of epidemics with which Communist authorities will be unable to cope;
- b. The stimulating of civilian and military public health and sanitation efforts in anticipation of early large-scale epidemics;
- c. The stimulation of renewed fighting zeal and hatred of the US among Communist troops, whose recent idleness may have resulted in deteriorating discipline and morale, and in possible friction between North Korean and Chinese Communist personnel.

10. The scale and nature of the campaign are such, however, as to indicate purposes far beyond those of internal propaganda alone. Such broader purposes may be limited solely to general foreign propaganda aims, or may involve preparations for some early major Communist move.

11. Among possible foreign propaganda purposes the following are probably the most important:

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- a. To lend weight to the "hate America" campaign;
- b. To discredit the US in the eyes of its UN allies and the rest of the world;
- c. To arouse fears, in both official and popular Western circles, that the US is aggravating an already explosive situation.

12. The Communists presumably would hope that by thus discrediting the US and alarming its allies they could render the UN delegation at the present truce discussions more amenable to Communist demands.

13. It is possible that the Communists either desire or fear an early breakdown of the armistice negotiations. In either of these contingencies the present campaign could serve to:

- a. Establish a strong moral position in the event of Communist renewal of large-scale military operations, possibly including the use of BW;
- b. Discourage UN action against Manchuria and China proper in the event that large-scale hostilities in Korea are renewed;
- c. Transfer discussions to the UN Security Council or some other forum (e.g. a Council of Foreign Ministers) in which the Korean question could

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be used as a bargaining weapon in the discussion of broader issues.

14. Beyond these possible purposes the campaign may be intended to serve the Communist aims of:

- a. Intensifying the "peace campaign", particularly with respect to the new Soviet draft peace proposals for Germany;
- b. Gaining support for the Soviet disarmament proposals in the UN;
- c. Creating among the governments and peoples of the West distrust and disunity which might undermine Western solidarity and the effectiveness of Western policy in Europe and elsewhere.

CONCLUSIONS

15. Although the BW campaign has been vigorously exploited for internal propaganda needs, its scope and nature indicate that it is intended to serve broader purposes.

16. The campaign is entirely consistent with, and conceivably could be in preparation for, some early major Communist move such as a renewal of large-scale military action, possibly including the use of BW. Since no other available evidence

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supports this interpretation, however, we do not believe that the current campaign alone indicates any imminent major Communist move.

17. We therefore conclude that the primary purpose of the campaign is to discredit the US and alarm its allies in order to:

- a. Weaken the UN bargaining position in the current cease-fire discussions; and
- b. Create doubt and dissention among the Western Powers generally.

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